

HOW TO LOBBY MPS IN PERSON ON PRO-LIFE ISSUES

As a grassroots campaigning organisation, SPUC's great strength is in our network of supporters up and down the country. Our power lies in the mass of our supporters lobbying their MPs. In this briefing, we explain how to lobby your MP in person, and tips to make your meeting as effective as possible.

WHO IS MY MP?

Firstly, identify who your MP is. For this briefing, we are concentrating on MPs, who legislate in Westminster. For supporters in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, it may often be more appropriate to contact your representatives in the devolved administrations, but you still have an MP. You can find out who your MP is on the parliamentary website (www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/mps) or via the SPUC website's MP tool.

Please only contact your own constituency MP. There is a strict parliamentary protocol where MPs will only take note of and reply to personal communications from their own constituents, so please do not waste your efforts contacting MPs other than your own.

HOW DO I ARRANGE A MEETING WITH MY MP?

Most MPs have their own websites where you can find contact information and details on how they engage with constituents.

If you want to write to your MP to request a meeting, the address is:

[Name of your MP], House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA. Their email address will be available on the parliamentary website and the MP's own website.

You can also call the House of Commons switchboard on 020 7219 3000 and ask to speak to your MP. You might be put through to your MP, but it will more likely be a member of staff or their answering machine.

The best place to meet your MP is either at their constituency office or at one of their advice surgeries. Most MPs hold at least one of these a month and are often in places such as local libraries.

Fridays are often the best day to meet with your MP, as the House of Commons is not usually sitting and MPs spend it in their constituencies. They will also spend more time in their constituencies during Parliamentary recesses (which are roughly the same as school holidays).

SHOULD I GO WITH A GROUP TO MEET MY MP?

If possible, go to meet your MP with other members of your SPUC branch or other pro-life supporters. Ask your MP how many people can be accommodated at the meeting. Be respectful of any security concerns they may have over seeing large groups.

HOW DO I PREPARE FOR MY MEETING?

Plan what points you want to make before your meeting. If you are going in a group, it is wise to plan who is going to make which points.

We would recommend focusing on one or two particular issues (such as an upcoming vote), rather than a wide-ranging discussion on abortion or assisted suicide. Even if you know your MP's general views on abortion, it is very likely that they will not know the details of a particular bill/debate. Make sure you familiarise yourself with the key points in the relevant SPUC briefing on the issue at hand. You can also bring a copy of the briefing with you to give to your MP.

SOME TIPS TO MAKE YOUR MEETING A SUCCESS:

- 1) Don't be nervous! You will almost certainly know more about the issue than your MP does. MPs are generalists, and apart from a few on either side of the debate who take a special interest in pro-life issues, most will know little about them. Armed with briefings from SPUC, you will be the expert.
- 2) Thank them for their time, and, if you can, thank them for one other piece of work they have done that you approve of, such as a local issue. Showing appreciation will get the meeting off to a positive start and help build a rapport.
- 3) Make your points personal. If you can, relate them in some way to your own experience or history, or a friend/acquaintance you can reference anonymously. Personal stories will cut through to MPs much quicker and more effectively than statistics, so tell them why you personally are concerned about the issue you are raising.
- 4) Do not give up if your MP is generally in favour of abortion. Make sure you explain the problems/issues with the specific issue at hand. An MP who supports legal abortion will not automatically want an increase in the time limit, or support abortion pills being sent by post, for instance.
- 5) If the meeting is about a particular vote, please press for an answer on how they intend to vote in this instance, not just their general view.

Don't forget to send SPUC a report of the meeting! You can post it in, or email political@spuc.org.uk



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